The Sketch

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MRS. MARK CLARK, ANNE, PAL AND THE GENERAL'S PANTS.

MRS. MARK CLARK *is the wife of General Mark Clark, Commander of the Allied Fifth Army, now engaged in the Italian campaign, and the victor of the tough battle of Salerno Bay. The trousers which she holds are the historic pants which the General lost when he waded ashore to North Africa last year. They were retrieved and are now in Washington. General Clark was the head of the party of British and American officers who made a secret landing in North Africa in 1942 and carried out the negotiations which facilitated our landing. He was then, at forty-six, the youngest General in the U.S. Army, and was Deputy Commander to General Eisenhower.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Shape of Things to Come. "We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us." Thus spake the Prime Minister, of the House of Commons. In other words, there is a divinity that shapes the ends of our buildings, rough-hew them as we will. It is a solemn thought. Living in a palace, does one become spacious-minded, and does a cottage make one narrow-minded? There are dicta to the contrary. I think it was Marcus Aurelius who said that it is possible to live well, *even in a palace*. A good many ballads would lead one to believe that contentment is scarcely possible except in a cottage (preferably with roses round the door); and the most famous of all those ditties (quoted, by way of peroration, by Mr. Churchill) cries yearningly, "Oh, give me my humble thatched cottage again!" It is not quite such an ingenuous wish as it sounds. A good many people will be expressing it after this war, and it looks as if humble thatched cottages are going to be luxury goods in short supply. However, there is always a chance of getting one of the Ernest Brown Model Love-nests, and if *they* don't move Englishmen to song, nothing will.

"This margarine tastes darned funny!"
"I expect it does, dear, seeing that it's butter!"

DRAWN BY STYX.

Squaring the Circle. Whether or not we are shaped by our dwelling-houses, it seems, on the authority of the Prime Minister, that the pattern of British politics has been governed by the rectangular design of the Mother of Parliaments. One could hardly go so far as to say that it is, in the ancient phrase, "four-square and without flaw," but it has (we are told) perforce created a clear-cut party system, whereas circular assemblies tend to spawn "splinter" parties. The theory is plausible, but cannot be pressed too far. It is true that no Englishman could ever count, much less understand, all the groups and parties which made the circle of the French Chamber of Deputies. But the American Congress is also circular, and no legislature has adhered more rigidly to a two-party system. A far greater advantage of our traditional House of Commons, and one which the Prime Minister specially commends, is that all the Members cannot meet there at one and the same time. That is an admirable principle of what may be called Democracy within Reason, and it was long ago perceived by Private Willis:

But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M.P.s in close proximity
A-thinking for themselves is what
No man can face with equanimity.

Persistent Gas. Besides, in a small Chamber you can enjoy all the beauties of the "conversational style." Gone are the resounding periods of Burke and Sheridan and Gladstone; Members no longer orate, but merely chat, and the great advantage of this is that very few people can hear them. These are conspicuous merits in the old-style House of Commons, which is to arise again like a Phœnix from the ashes; but there appears to be one serious handicap. According to Lord Bledisloe, the Hon. Members generally, and the reporters invariably, live in a condition of chronic asphyxiation. Pure in word and deed, they nevertheless habitually breathe foul air. "In the ladies' gallery a soporific effect was produced by the 'ozoniser,' intended for air purification, emitting occasionally nitrous oxide (or laughing gas) instead of oxygen." It is intolerable to think of distinguished feminine "strangers," who have come specially to admire their husbands' oratory, alternately falling into a coma and bursting into hysterical laughter, as if their teeth were being extracted. It was not for this that Simon de Montfort strove and conquered.

Keep the Party Clean! We hear, too, of severe nose and throat troubles among Members, due to "super-desiccation of the fan-driven air, rising through the floor grating from under the feet of M.P.s." How can we expect clear thinking and winged words when infernal blasts rise from under the very feet of legislators — blasts which carry "minute particles of boot-borne street impurities"? It shocks the conscience of the nation to think of its representatives having their vocal chords and nasal passages clogged with "boot-borne street impurities"; why, it might result in some of the representatives not being able to speak at all! And then where should we be? The root of the trouble, as Lord Bledisloe depressingly says, is that the House of Commons "is not easily accessible to

"'Ere, put yer back into it! D'you think we're doin' this for fun?" (DRAWN BY SILENUS.)

TWELVE OLD LETTERS MAKE A BOX FOR RIFLE CARTRIDGES: DON'T HOARD YOURS.

the fresh air which nature provides." This confirms a widely-held opinion that Westminster needs a blast of fresh air and Whitehall needs a hurricane thereof.

The Plastic Arts. It surprises me that it is not proposed to construct the new House of Commons out of plastics. So far as I can understand, practically everything we are going to manufacture, use, eat, think and dream in the future is going to be made of plastics. The future belongs to the chemists, and with a lump or two of coal, or a few soya beans, they are prepared to minister to practically all human needs. As we do not grow soya beans in this country, and at present seem to import them chiefly for sausage-stuffing, it looks as if we shall still have to depend largely on coal. This is a tiresome, clumsy, unwieldy substance, which is always causing trouble all over the world. Everybody wants it and nobody likes getting it; and it takes up an inconvenient amount of space and transport even when you have got it—and then you (and I) waste half of it up the chimney. These chemists are smart fellows, but nature always has a revenge on them. *Eliminate coal* is my simple advice to them—I don't know how, but that is their business. Meanwhile, why aren't we all growing soya beans in our Victory Gardens?

Of Human Kindness. Another deplorable failure of the chemists is that they don't seem able to manufacture synthetic milk. The cow, like the hen, just laughs at them; and so we are all going short of proteids. It is all very well for Lord Woolton to promise us turkeys and oranges, apples and lemons for Christmas, but man cannot live by turkey alone, and sooner or later you have to come back, a humble suppliant, to the cow. I have never been able to regard milk, as a beverage, with that enthusiasm which it arouses in the United States; but, in the perverse way of human nature, I admire it more when I can't get it than when I am surrounded by oceans of it. It is the same with the children; those who erstwhile made wry faces over their glass of milk now crave for it like a drunkard for his dram. This sort of thing, I must admit, makes it difficult for Lord Woolton, but I dare say that out of a large experience he is indulgent towards the frailties and contrarieties of human nature.

Green Stuff and Nonsense. Anyhow, I think that Lord Woolton is better at turkeys, oranges and lemons, or even milk and Spam, than he is at cabbages. Very few people, until recently, have realised the literary possibilities of the cabbage, the cauliflower and the brussels sprout. But you begin to think differently about the dignity of the cabbage when you see that it can inspire prose like this: "Where a secondary wholesaler sells by net weight to a retailer a package of green vegetables which was purchased by such wholesaler as a standard package and complied at the time of delivery to him with the minimum weight appropriate to the designation under which it was sold, but which does not comply with such minimum net weight at the time of sale to the retailer, the maximum price thereof by net weight on such sale may be increased by a sum at a rate not exceeding 7½ per cent. on the said maximum price (exclusive of any additions made in accordance with the second schedule to this Order)." Chew well the cud of this greenstuff, and while doing so, reflect that there are those who desire and intend that this free country shall go on living as long as possible, even in times of peace, under this sort of benevolent "control." We already have at least six Ministers grappling with reconstruction. After they have reconstructed everything, I hope a few plain, ordinary citizens will begin to construct something.

"My *dear* John, it is sometimes *very* difficult to know which is the most *suitable* aspect of the truth!" (DRAWN BY KENNETH BEAUCHAMP.)

How Sleep the Brave. Is there any truth in the rumour that the Navy is going to the dogs? For centuries past it has been one of the very few things which, in the opinion of most true Britons, has not been going to the dogs; but it causes grave misgivings when we learn that not only are

Continued overleaf.

"Would you mind telling me what I've learned to-day? Mummy's sure to want to know."

DRAWN BY JAYCOT.

Continued.] naval officers allowed to wear monocles, but naval ratings are allowed to wear pyjamas. There might be some conceivable justification for the first concession, if it enabled officers, in the true Nelson manner, to put the monocle to the blind eye; but I really cannot picture the Hearts of Oak of Trafalgar wallowing—if that is the correct expression—in pink pyjamas. Anyhow, the dry-bob Forces seem to be made of sterner stuff, and no Other Rank of the Army or Air Force is permitted to undermine morale with this form of decadence. One soldier reports that when he asked for pyjamas he was told by a callous assistant that the only "articles of clothing" which she was allowed to sell him was handkerchiefs. Without wishing to pamper our hardy troops, I really do not see how you can expect them to spend the night wrapped up in handkerchiefs. You never know what form the class war will take; not even Marx, I fancy, could have prophesied that pyjamas would ever be a cause of social unrest.

"And this is John Milton Reading It."

Our fighting men are, however—and very properly—people with ideas of their own. There has been much complaint that there are no poets among them, and it is certainly true that up to the present time we have not had much literature from the front (where, doubtless, there are a few other things to think of). But I have been reading an account of an officer who not only writes prolific poetry, but broadcasts it to the loyal troops by means of loud-speaker. I feel a little doubtful about this method of brightening the war. I can imagine circumstances in which it might amount to the military offence of causing alarm and despondency. We all know the type of man who is apt at any moment to produce an ode from his pocket and recite it at you—some even want to sell it to you—and if this habit were to be aggravated by the amplifier, it might add seriously to the horrors both of war and of peace. On the whole, I prefer mute, inglorious Miltons to stentorian ones. It would be frightful if Poets Laureate in future were to be provided with microphones instead of butts of Canary. Canaries sometimes sing, but phones sometimes croon.

"Was *you* at Dunkirk?"
"No!"
"Blimey! That's a coincidence—nor was I!"

DRAWN BY WILSON FENNING.

Not to be Taken.

Men, and women too, not only croon, but they will do even more excruciating things in order to get sympathy. It is, of course, quite common for them to swallow swords; you will even find people who will swallow spinach, parsnips, tripe and trotters; but it is not quite so common, and it is certainly not so nourishing, to swallow spoons, forks and mug-handles. It is a difficult feat in itself to swallow a dessert-spoon, and you have certainly earned your operation if you can perform the feat; and an operation gets you a lot of attention. This was the method recently adopted by a prisoner

"You see, my wife gets a cold; I catch the end of her cold; she retakes the end of mine, and so we go on. That's my sole reason for a temporary separation."

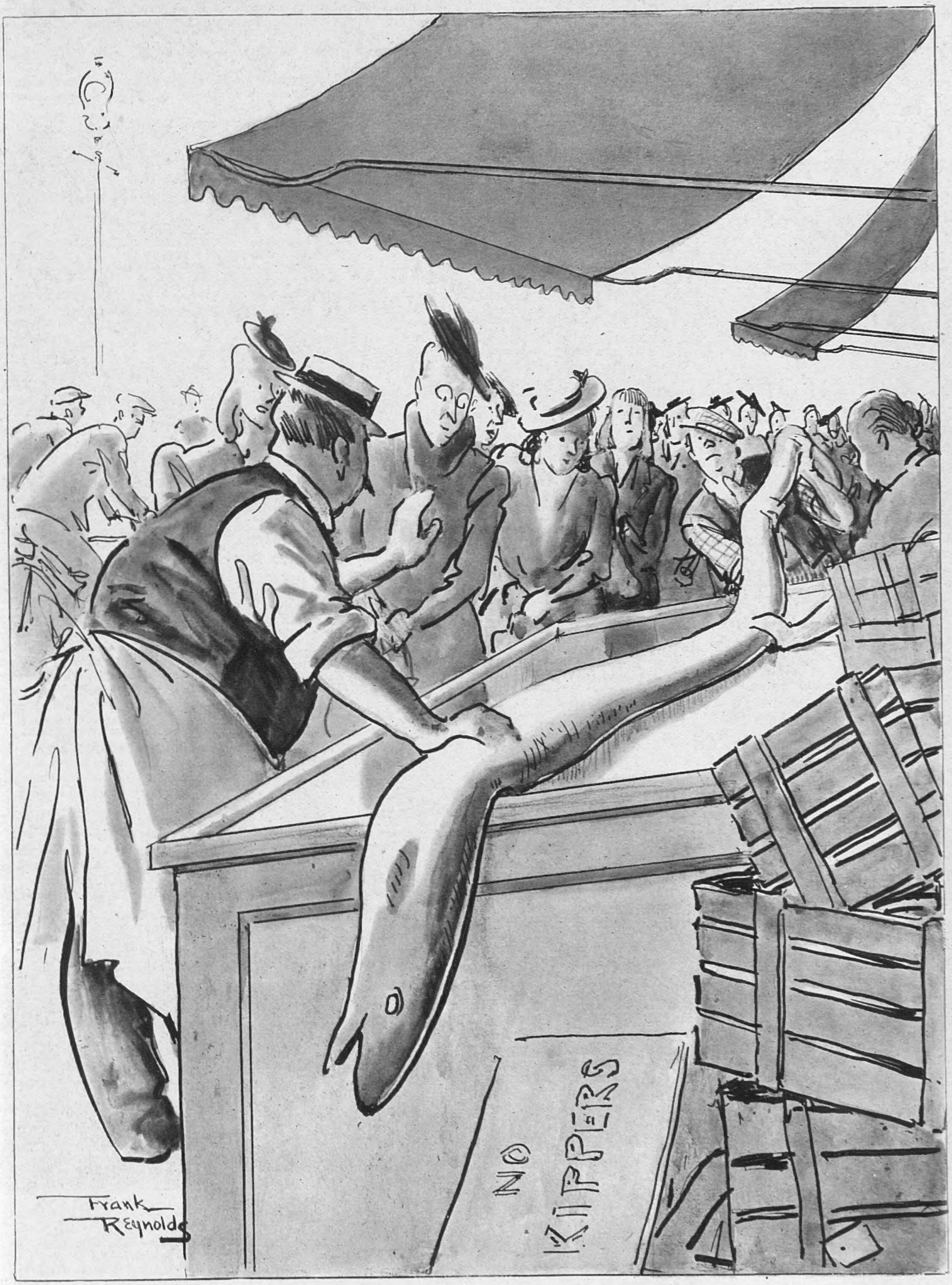
DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

who wanted to make them all sorry for their hard-heartedness in giving him three years' penal servitude. It is a subtle form of revenge, and it is to be hoped that this example will not lead to an outbreak of mass spoon-swallowing in our prisons. Spoons are far too precious nowadays to be treated in this careless manner.

The Full Quiver.

The love-life of the late Mr. Abram Smith, of Salt Lake City, makes one wonder whether we ought not to look to Brigham Young for the solution of our population problem. Mr. Smith, dying at the age of 91, left 135 descendants, from children to great-great-grandchildren. Domesticity on a generous scale does not seem to have shortened his days, and if we had a few more Abram Smiths, perhaps we should not hear so much depressing talk about empty cradles.

The seventy-sixth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

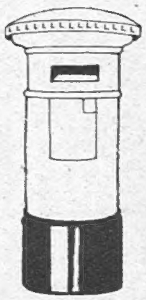


"NO, MADAM; A YARD IF YOU WANT IT—NOT A POUND!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.

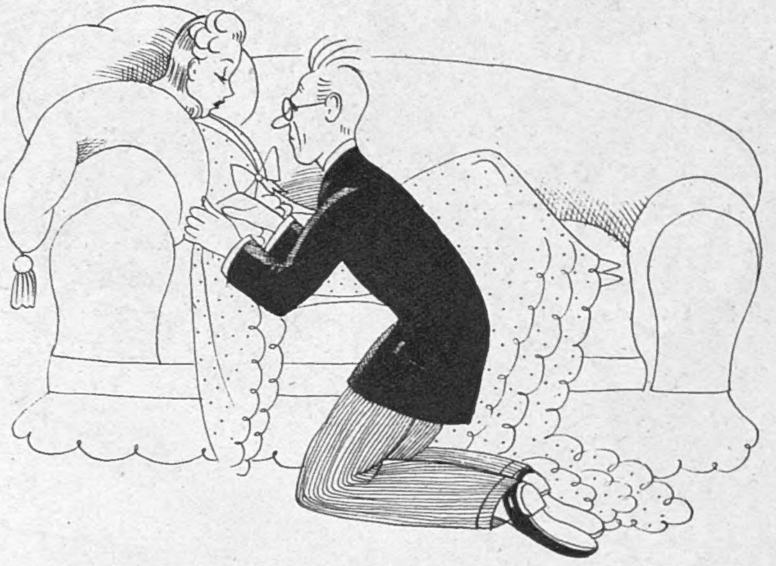


MY DEAR ROBERT—Faith is looking radiant. She feels perfectly well, looks lovelier than ever and has produced from her capacious wardrobes some dazzling tea-gowns, which she would never have had a chance of wearing otherwise, and which she changes several times a day. Charles keeps telling her to go for long country walks, but Faith hates walking at the best of times, so she spends most of the day on the sofa, while the Conductor brings her cups of Ovaltine.

Our Faith has always had an eye to the main chance, and she has now started a Sewing Bee for her Baby, for which you provide your own materials (bought with your own coupons), and bring your own tea. She was surprised, and rather hurt, when the Baby Bees, as she called them, didn't prove wildly popular, and when people found that they weren't even going to be given drinks before they went home there was a distinct falling-off, until at last the only members left were Lady B., and me and the Conductor, who taught himself to crochet as soon as Faith whispered her secret, and has embarked on a Pram Rug.

Lady B. is a quick and experienced knitter, and has already made one small pink and one small blue woolly coat. She made the pink one first to please the Conductor, who wants a girl, but this threw Faith into such a frenzy that she quickly bought some blue wool and began another. It is nice to know that whichever sex the Baby turns out to be, *one* of the parents will be pleased, and, of course, there is just a chance that both of them will be.

Lady B. has plumped for a Girl, mostly, I think, because she likes knitting pink wool, but she says it is because the mothers of daughters are so much nicer than the mothers of sons, and that Faith has had quite enough spoiling in her life as it is, and it would do her good to have a pretty daughter to throw her into the shade.



"Ran to kneel beside her sofa."

She made this announcement during one of the Baby Bees, and the Conductor was very much upset. "How can you say such cruel things to darling Faith?" he said, and he threw down his crochet and ran to kneel beside her sofa. "You ought to remember her Condition."

"Faith's condition is a perfectly normal one for a young married woman," said Lady B., crisply, "and if we 've got to tiptoe about the place and talk in whispers for the next two months just because she 's going to have a baby, I, personally, shall stay away."

"This labour of love."

Lady B. says she has noticed a certain amount of War Weariness, anxiety neurosis and Slackening of the War Effort in this place lately, and she has adopted a bracing attitude to counteract it. But nobody is ever offended by what Lady B. says to them, and she has certainly done the Conductor, who began the prospective father's anxious pacing as soon as he knew he was going to be one, a power of good.

"Pick up your crochet and go on with it, dear. Darling Lady B. is only jealous because she never had any sons herself," said Faith placidly, and the Conductor went back to his chair, picked up his crochet, turned in his toes and assumed the heavy frown engendered by this labour of love.

"I suppose I asked for that," said Lady B., with the greatest good nature.

"I bet Henrietta wants it to be a Boy, anyway," said Faith, who won't allow us to talk about anything at the Baby Bee except the Bee Baby.

"I don't mind which it is as long as I don't have to push it about in its pram," I said.

"But Henrietta, I was relying upon you for at least one afternoon a week!"

"Then you 're going to be disappointed, Faith," I said. "Of all the back-breaking, inside-dropping, dreary and depressing occupations, pushing a sleeping baby about the streets in a perambulator heads the list."

"What a wicked thing to say!"

"I love Bill and the Linnet, and I wouldn't not have had them for anything, but I can honestly say that I have spent the dreariest hours of my life pushing them around in their prams, and I 'm never going to do it again if I can help it."

"But don't you want to push the Linnet's babies about?"

"No!"

"Not even Bill's?"

"No!"

"There 's something very hard about Henrietta," said Faith to Lady B.

"It probably makes her back ache," said Lady B., who always thinks of something kind to say on my behalf.

"I 've been making enquiries about motor-prams, so that darling Faith won't get too tired," said the Conductor, "but you can't get them now, because of the petrol. You know, I don't think this crochet is going right. It seems to get smaller and smaller as I go on," and he held it up.

"It 's a Victory Pram Rug," said Lady B. "You 'll have to embroider it down the front with three dots and a dash."

"Three Dots and a Dash," said Faith dreamily. "It sounds like Quads."

The Conductor gave a strangled cry and Lady B. patted him on the knee.

"Well," I said, "I wish my knitting looked as much like a Baby's Bootee as the Conductor's crochet looks like a Pram Rug."

Everybody looked at my knitting in silence. It was slightly grey from repeated unravellings, and not in the least like a Baby's Bootee, or anything else.

"You must persevere," said Lady B. "The only thing with that sort of knitting on two needles is to follow the directions blindly. Sometimes it suddenly turns out all right."

We worked in silence for a little, and then the Conductor went to get Faith's Ovaltine. Lady B. and I watched wistfully while she drank it.

"Is it nice, Faith?"

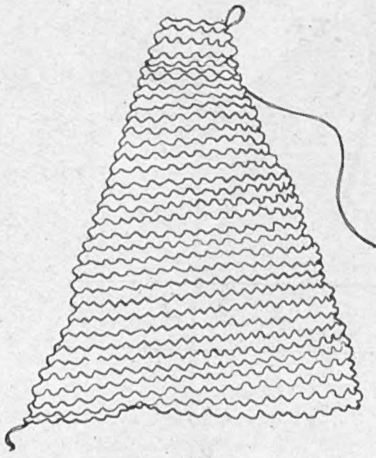
"*Delicious!*"

"She gets extra meat, too," said the Conductor proudly.

"If anybody gets extra milk, it ought to be Henrietta—she 's so thin," said Lady B.

"Henrietta is one of the people who are not worth preserving in the world to-day," said Faith. "She isn't going to have a Baby, and she isn't doing War Work."

"She looks after Charles," said Lady B.



"'It 's a Victory Pram Rug.'"

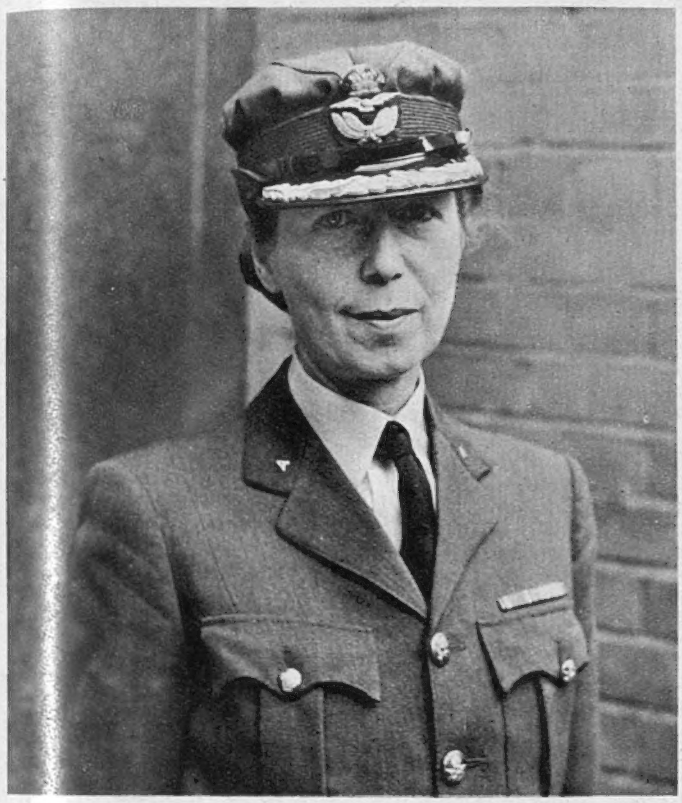
"Lots of us could look after darling Charles," said Faith. "He had a hole in his sock yesterday."

I was just thinking of a stinging retort, when suddenly my knitting came out. "Look, look!" I cried. "It *is* a Bootee!"

And so it was, Robert.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend, HENRIETTA.

THE "TOPS" OF THE WOMEN'S SERVICES.



AIR COMMANDANT LADY WELSH, *Director of the W.A.A.F., was gazetted early last month. She is forty-seven, tall, slim and very smart. She has come up to the top through all the stages, and served in the F.A.N.Y. in the last war. Her husband is Air Marshal Sir William Lawrie Welsh: their seventeen-year-old son is at a public school.*

MRS. B. W. CUTHBERT, O.B.E., *wife of Captain John Cuthbert, R.N., has been Chief Woman Fire Officer of the National Fire Service since the end of 1942. She entered the Fire Service in the days of the old A.F.S. early in 1938, and was appointed Senior Staff Officer at London H.Q. in November 1941, shortly after the amalgamation of the Fire Services into the N.F.S. As a Group Commander she worked at London H.Q. through the blitz, 1940-41. This portrait, by Maurice Codner, R.P., is on view at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' Exhibition at Burlington House.*

CHIEF CONTROLLER L. V. L. E. WHATELEY, C.B.E., *Director of the A.T.S., in place of Mrs. Jean Knox, who resigned owing to illness. Mrs. Whateley, whose husband is a Squadron Leader in the R.A.F., has been Deputy Director since September. She is forty-one, volunteered for the A.T.S. in 1938, was appointed junior officer a month later, and posted to the War Office at the outbreak of war. Last February she and two other women were co-opted members of the City of London Territorial Army and Air Force Association, of which her father, Colonel Evelyn Wood, was formerly secretary, and her grandfather, the late Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., was the first chairman.*

In 1939 MRS. VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS, C.B.E., *was appointed Director of the W.R.N.S., in which she also served 1917-19, when she gave up society journalism for the purpose. The daughter of the late Sir J. K. Laughton, R.N., in 1924 she married Mr. G. D. Mathews. Her rank is equivalent to that of a Rear-Admiral in the Royal Navy.*

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

BETTE DAVIS'S directors are said to have said that for Bette to get going at her best she needs to play an intelligent female who is either wrong or wronged, against a background of earthquake, upper-class murder, or historical crisis. Personally, I like my Bette wrong and hopping mad—a cross between Jezebel, Mildred of " Human Bondage " and Regina of " The Little Foxes "—which may be one reason why her latest opus, " NOW, VOYAGER " (Warner's), doesn't appeal to me very strongly.

THE BEST PLAYS.

Starred by " The Sketch." ***=*highest value.*

*** " WATCH ON THE RHINE " (*Aldwych*). Diana Wynyard, Anton Walbrook, Athene Seyler, Margaretta Scott. Anti-Nazis in U.S.

*** " FLARE PATH " (*Apollo*). R.A.F. " ops." Adrianne Allen.

*** " BLITHE SPIRIT " (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Kay Hammond, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne.

*** " PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX " (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

** " THE DANCING YEARS " (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** " SWEET AND LOW " (*Ambassadors*). Hermione Gingold and Walter Crisham in revue.

** " LOTTIE DUNDASS " (*Cambridge*). Unusual thriller with Ann Todd and Sybil Thorndike.

** " THE LISBON STORY " (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** " CLAUDIA " (*St. Martin's*). Joyce Redman and Hugh Sinclair on an American farm.

** " SOMETHING IN THE AIR " (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** " ARC DE TRIOMPHE " (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** " PANAMA HATTIE " (*Piccadilly*). Revue, with Bebe Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** " STRIKE A NEW NOTE " (*Prince of Wales*). George Black's revue, with the rising generation and Sid Field.

** " MY SISTER EILEEN " (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** " JUNIOR MISS " (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** " ARSENIC AND OLD LACE " (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** " HI-DE-HI " (*Stoll*). Hilarious revue, with Flanagan and Allen, Florence Desmond, Eddie Gray.

** " IT 'S TIME TO DANCE " (*Winter Garden*). Musical with Jack Buchanan, Fred Emney, Elsie Randolph.

* " IT 'S FOOLISH, BUT IT 'S FUN " (*Coliseum*). Revue with Nervo and Knox.

* " SHE FOLLOWS ME ABOUT " (*Garrick*). Farce. Robertson Hare, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey, Joyce Heron.

* " THEY CAME TO A CITY " (*Globe*). Priestley play with John Clements, Googie Withers, Ada Reeve.

* " LOVE FOR LOVE " (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* " FLYING COLOURS " (*Lyric*). Revue. Binnie Hale, Douglas Byng, Jackie Hunter.

* SADLER'S WELLS OPERA COMPANY. (*New*). Autumn season.

* " MR. BOLFRY " (*Playhouse*). New James Bridie play. Alastair Sim.

* " ACACIA AVENUE " (*Vaudeville*). Comedy. Gordon Harker, Hubert Gregg, Dorothy Hamilton, Megs Jenkins.

* " THE LOVE RACKET " (*Victoria Palace*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* " QUIET WEEK-END " (*Wyndham's*). Sequel to " Quiet Wedding."

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper ; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

In " Now, Voyager," Bette makes one of her rare appearances as a downright good girl. Right through the film she doesn't hurt a soul, except her mother, who deserves everything she gets, anyhow. This stiff old Boston dame, played in a handsome way by Gladys Cooper, has raised Bette—called Charlotte in the film—in such a way as to cut love right out of her life. She has made her wear thick glasses, sensible shoes, long foulard dresses, and a mousy hair-do. The result is that Charlotte, at twenty-eight, is a bundle of nerves and a positive fright. She hides cigarettes and lipstick in her bureau drawer. She reads sweltering books in secret, and locks her bedroom door.

In fact, she is going to pieces fast, when Claude Rains comes along as a psycho-analyst and takes her in hand. After three months in his sanatorium she emerges a new woman ; without glasses, but with plucked eyebrows, high-heeled shoes, a ravishing wardrobe, and hair with the fashionable up-swirled line. The psycho-analyst presses into her hand a quotation from Walt Whitman, " Now, Voyager, sail thou forth to seek and find," and packs her off on a South American cruise.

On shipboard, where she rapidly becomes the belle of the boat, Charlotte falls in love with a man called Jerry Durrance (Paul Henreid), who speaks with a beguiling Continental accent, and has a neat trick of lighting two cigarettes in his lips at once. Jerry, it transpires, is a married man who doesn't get along with his wife. But he is so nice, and Charlotte is so nice, that they can't bring themselves to do anything about it, but kiss, and smoke their twin cigarettes and part. Back home in the old Boston mansion, Charlotte settles down to a life of high sacrifice. She is brushed with tragedy, you understand, but noble, very noble. She dresses more smartly than ever and holds her head high. Every night Jerry sends her three camellias, which she pins to the corsage of her black evening gown. She refuses a high-bred suitor (John Loder)—" Do you know Elliott Livingstone ? " Dr. Loder, we presume—a social *gaffe* which brings the proud old mother to her grave.

The old lady's death leaves Charlotte a rich woman, but it also leaves her mentally shaken, not the psychological mess she used to be, mind you, but on the verge. She rushes off to the psycho-analyst's place to have a mental breakdown, and there she finds, of all people, Jerry's daughter. This unhappy girl has glasses, bad teeth, flat shoes and dowdy hair, and is in just the same bad shape that Charlotte formerly was.

The film is now a natural for a gooey, sticky ending. Charlotte rises above all her troubles, and devotes herself to Jerry's child's welfare. She takes away her glasses, fixes her teeth, gives her that off-the-face hair-do that is supposed to inspire confidence, and makes her as sound as a new penny. She takes her home to live in the old Boston house, where Jerry can visit her and smoke a twin cigarette periodically. This extremely odd arrangement appears to delight everybody—Charlotte, Jerry, Jerry's child's mother, and the authors of the script.

Will " Now, Voyager " be popular ? Undoubtedly. There is always a public for romances of sacrifice with beautiful, bitter-sweet, inconclusive endings. Miss Davis has never looked better. Mr. Henreid has a sad-eyed, dogged charm that would do credit to a prize Saint Bernard. I shouldn't be surprised to find the piece running at Warner's Theatre until Christmas. Indeed, while I was watching it, I thought it *was* going on till Christmas, but its owners assure me the dear thing barely lasted two hours.

And talking of owners, the people who produce, distribute and show " THE YELLOW CANARY " (Empire and Regal), have certainly made the critic's task a light one. At the head of my synopsis appears the legend, " RKO Radio is departing from the practice of giving the story, since to do so would be to spoil the interest of the film. It is hoped that you will assist by not divulging the story contents to your friends who intend viewing this production." Before the film begins, Miss Anna Neagle, the star, appears on the screen in a brief trailer, and adjures us, with the hint of a Nell Gwyn wink, not to " spill the beans."

Thus happily relieved of all responsibility, I need merely tell you that " The Yellow Canary " is about a German plot to blow up the Port of Halifax. Miss Neagle, Richard Greene, Albert Lieven, and that clever actress, Lucie Mannheim, are the persons most actively employed around the scene of operations. Mr. Greene, about whom there are no beans to spill, is quite openly a British Intelligence agent. Mr. Lieven and Miss Mannheim are Polish Beans. Miss Neagle, the principal Bean, is described by other members of the cast as " the notorious Sally Maitland," or " Sally from Unter den Linden." She is first seen signalling to the Luftwaffe in the London raid that culminated in a bomb on Buckingham Palace. As a loyal member of the Critics' Circle, I find myself gratefully relieved of the need to comment on this characterisation. I stand four-square on the old critical adage, " If you have beans, forbear to spill them now."

" HI DIDDLE DIDDLE " (New Gallery) is a slightly more sophisticated version of " Hellzapoppin." It is " crazy " in the accepted technical sense, a medley of shrewd but apparently inconsequential *non sequiturs*. It is something about a raffish adventurer (Adolphe Menjou), something about a high-powered operatic diva (Pola Negri), something about a bird-witted mother (Billie Burke), and something about a girl (Martha Scott) who is trying to enjoy a brief honeymoon with a sailor (Dennis O'Keefe). Gipsy Rose Lee's little sister, June Havoc, also bobs up now and then as an artful torch-singer. The camera is used as a camera should be, to play tricks with time, space and logic, and the whole thing adds up to a neat hour of irresponsible fun. The highlight of " Hi Diddle Diddle," to picturegoers with long memories, is the return to the screen of Pola Negri, most famous of

Madeleine Marlowe (BETTY GRABLE), *European musical comedy queen, engaged to the Duke of Trippingham* (REGINALD GARDINER), *finds out that U.S.A. newspaperman Sam Magee is directing a scandal campaign against her and sails for America to deal with him. Aboard ship her manager Charles Skinner* (ALAN DINEHART) *and her friend Edna Van Dyck* (VIRGINIA GREY) *congratulate her on her engagement. From "Sweet Rosie O'Grady," Twentieth Century-Fox Technicolor production due at the Gaumont, Haymarket and Marble Arch Pavilion, November 21.*

all vamps of the silent era. Miss Negri plays Menjou's wife in this film, nearly twenty years after she played his Imperial mistress in "Forbidden Paradise." Menjou has never forgotten their first meeting, all those years ago, on a Hollywood set. He looked from Miss Negri's dead-white face (she has always favoured a blanched make-up) to her scarlet-painted toe-nails. "My God!" he cried, in a panic. "You're bleeding!"

Pola Negri left America, except for one brief visit to play in the undistinguished "A Woman Commands," in 1928. Since then she has worked in France and Germany. In 1941 she escaped to the States from unoccupied France, and "Hi Diddle Diddle" is her first job since her return. She plays a Wagnerian opera singer (the voice is dubbed) with tremendous temperament and a real sense of comedy. She doesn't disdain slapstick; wears sumptuous gowns and her black hair softly dressed; acts with the old skill, and looks, if possible, even more comely than she did twenty years ago.

ROBERT YOUNG *and* DOROTHY McGUIRE *play the chief parts in the film adaptation of "Claudia," the play which has had such a long run in London. It opens at the Odeon, Leicester Square, on Friday, December 10.*

"THE SKY'S THE LIMIT" (Odeon) is an unassuming little picture, an intimate little picture, almost a cosy little picture, with a small and pleasant cast—principally Fred Astaire, Joan Leslie and Robert Benchley. Fred is a Flying Tiger who is tired of being lionised, and wants to spend his leave incognito. Joan, a newspaper photographer, is the girl who loves him, and Bob is the friendly publisher who wants to marry the girl who wants to marry Fred.

As a dancer Joan Leslie is nowhere in the Astaire class, but she is a nice little thing, and Fred Astaire has never depended for screen success on a dancing partner with his own uncanny genius. Ginger Rogers, bless her soul, was no Pavlova. As for Robert Benchley, he has never appeared in a film which he did not enrich and adorn. His bland, social mien, his observation of men and of manners, his confidential address, have a way of investing the flimsiest script with an air of good sense and goodwill. It is part of his art to preserve the illusion of an amateur amongst a bunch of pros. He still gives the impression of a writer who has wandered into films by mistake. But I'd sooner listen to Robert Benchley fumbling through an after-dinner speech on the screen than to many a star actor declaiming his prize bit of Shakespeare.

Fred Astaire, a mere springald of forty-three, dances as nimbly as ever these days, though not quite as much. If anything, his rarer numbers seem to have a richer content; one can, without being too fanciful, detect in them a reflective criticism, a kind of commentary on life. Dancing here, in the jaded light of early morning, from saloon to saloon, he creates a mood as subtle as that of Coward's "Dance, Little Lady." The effect is one of slurred abandon; the method that of the most strait and delicate control.

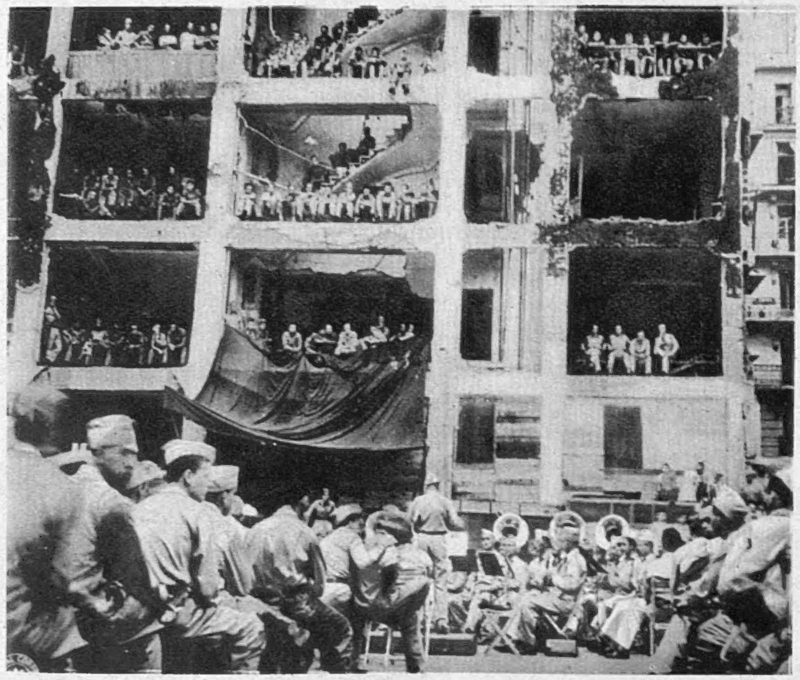
Some day, perhaps, Fred Astaire will receive the recognition he deserves as one of the world's most important dancers. As an American

Sam (ROBERT YOUNG), *wishing to revenge himself on Madeleine for circulating a story that she is to marry him, persuades the editor, Thomas Moran* (ADOLPHE MENJOU), *that the "Police Gazette" should run a series of sensation stories on their "romance." This publicity makes the star's new show a big hit. Moran steals some of her love-letters to continue the series, but Sam snatches them back. There is a fight, and Madeleine hears Sam telling Moran he loves her.*

critic wrote of him recently: "In his own field he has style, elegance, impeccable line, integrity, just as Pavlova had in hers. He also has imagination and buoyancy, rhythm and a sense of motor being that are incomparable." The critic adds the shrewd observation that all the Astaire numbers in his films are photographed "straight on," so that the dance appears as a dance, and not as a series of angle shots and camera devices. "This may be," he goes on, "and doubtless is, bad cinema practice, but it makes for wonderfully satisfying dance recording." An idea. Why not a screen collection of all the choicest Astaire numbers?

MARY MARTIN *is Bonnie Porter in "True to Life," Paramount picture at the Plaza. Franchot Tone and Dick Powell, as radio script-writers of the Sudsy Suds programme, are to be fired unless they make the feature true to life. Out for material the pair stumble by chance upon the Porter family, and exploit their family life heavily for Sudsy Suds. The writers both fall for Bonnie, but when the Porter family discover their betrayal, and sue Sudsy Suds for a large sum, their employers fire them both.*

"TRUE TO LIFE" (Plaza) is an engaging trifle about two radio script writers (Dick Powell and Franchot Tone), who are suddenly smitten with the dazzling idea of putting more or less natural conversation and characterisation on the air. To do this, Mr. Powell makes his home with a waitress's family (waitress, Mary Martin; family, chiefly Victor Moore), and reports to Mr. Tone on their daily doings. The programme becomes a smash-hit, but the family are not amused. The whole thing is the lightest of light comedies, deftly done.



Members of the audience at an Army Band concert in Algiers were accommodated in tiers of "boxes" made by the wall-less rooms in a bombed building.

Mareth, cub of the Prime Minister's lion, Rota, was officially adopted as mascot of the "Lion" Bomber Squadron, R.C.A.F., but will remain at the Zoo. W/CDR. R. S. TURNBULL, D.F.M., is behind the banner (left)

W/CDR. J. R. GORDON-FINLAYSON, D.S.O., D.F.C., and MRS. GORDON-FINLAYSON posed with their baby daughter, PENELOPE ANN, after the christening at St. Martin's, Ruislip.

The engagement of LADY JANE PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE, A.T.S., eldest daughter of the Earl of Radnor, and of Mrs. M. W. W. Selby-Lowndes, to Mr. K. G. Darrall-Rew, Irish Guards, has been announced.

SEC. LIEUT. TYRONE POWER, the film-star, is now a U.S. Marine. Here he is facing up to a Press conference of Marine Corps women reporters!

MRS. WINSTON CHURCHILL, GENERAL SMUTS, Prime Minister of South Africa, and LADY NEWSON-SMITH, the new Lady Mayoress (l. to r.), are here seen at the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Mansion House.

MANSION HOUSE SPEECH, WEDDINGS, A CHRISTENING, STARS

MISS PEGGY DIGGINS, *accredited U.S. Army War Photographer, got some good pictures at a recent investiture. She is here snapping* FLIGHT-SGT. J. HAYDEN, *who received the D.F.M.*

LIEUT. COMMANDER PETER SCOTT, M.B.E., R.N.V.R., *son of the Arctic explorer, has been awarded a bar to his D.S.C. for "great courage, leadership and enterprise in action with enemy forces in the Channel." He is seen with* MRS. SCOTT, *formerly Miss Elizabeth Jane Howard.*

MISS VICTORIA HOPPER *will play the name-part in the panto. "Cinderella," to be produced for the Forces in the Opera House, Cairo, at Christmas by* ENSA.

LIEUT. JOHN ALEXANDER MARRACK, R.N., *twin son of Mr. and Mrs. P. E. Marrack, married* MISS BEATRICE CHARLOTTE (BETTY) POTTER, W.R.N.S., *second daughter of the late Dr. Potter, and of Mrs. Prance, at Ashtead.*

SIR SAMUEL JOSEPH, *last year's Lord Mayor, and the new Lord Mayor,* SIR FRANK E. NEWSON-SMITH, *are seen listening to* MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL *delivering his great Mansion House speech.*

LIEUT. JOHN A. BATE, R.N., *son of Mr. Stanley Bate, married* MISS PAMELA RHODES, *daughter of Mr. W. Sutcliffe Rhodes, at St. Mark's Church, South Audley Street.*

AND A SHOW: BUDGET OF UP-TO-DATE PICTORIAL NEWS.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

THIRD OFFICER COLLINETTE—*for upholding the Senior Service by a smart win in free style.*

LIEUT. MARK BONHAM-CARTER and MAJOR THOMAS P. BUTLER, both of the Grenadier Guards, recently made their escape from a German prison camp and trekked 400 miles to the British lines. When Italy collapsed the Germans took over control of the camp, and the two officers scaled a 15-ft. wall while the sentries were facing the other way; dyed their uniforms to look like civilians; travelled always by day, covering about fifteen miles daily, and swam rivers rather than crossing by bridges.

[*Continued below.*

Rear-Admiral C. Alexandris, Greek C.-in-C., presents her trophy to Third Officer Collinette.

MEMBERS of the Women's Royal Naval Service stationed in the Middle East know what to do with their spare time. They go swimming, and some of them showed their prowess at the United Services Swimming Gala at the Sporting Club, Alexandria, recently. Our photographs show Third Officer Collinette at the start of the Alexandria United Services Ladies' 100-metre Free Style Swimming Championship, and afterwards, on winning, receiving the trophy from Rear-Admiral C. Alexandris, the Greek Commander-in-Chief.

THESE MEN OF THE EIGHTH ARMY—*for their Diogenes-like attitude towards a tub.*

THE EIGHTH ARMY SOLDIERS in our photograph seem to prove that with all his boasted asceticism, Diogenes was probably pretty comfortable in that tub of his. A large, roomy wine-cask has its merits, whether full or empty, and these men on the Termoli front, with the soldier's genius for improvisation have made of their new quarters quite a reasonably pleasing billet, air-free and sunny.

MARY PICKFORD, lately "the world's sweetheart," and SHIRLEY TEMPLE, until quite recently the world's wonder-child film-star, have a degree of similarity in their faces and their fortunes. Mary was just fifteen when she scored her first picture success in "The New York Hat," and Shirley, now fifteen—and looking so grown-up her fans would hardly know her—is just about to play her first real dramatic rôle in a new film, "Since You Went Away."

MARY PICKFORD *and* SHIRLEY TEMPLE—*for having a certain resemblance, both in face and fortune.*

Continued.] The 400 miles took four weeks to cover. They had to cross the German lines, which were drawn up against the British—how, no one knows except themselves—and arrived safely in the British lines. They took for their motto: "Trust the Italian peasant," and they were not disappointed.

LIEUT. BONHAM-CARTER *(seen with his parents, Sir M. and Lady Violet Bonham-Carter)* and MAJOR T. P. BUTLER *(with his wife)—for their 400-mile escape from a German prison camp in dyed uniforms.*

SUPREME COMMANDER, S.-E. ASIA—LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN.

In his uniform as full Admiral, this portrait of LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, *"triphibian" Commander-in-Chief, S.-E. Asia Command, was taken just before he left for Delhi to take up his appointment. After brief preliminary consultations with the C.-in-C., India, General Auchinleck, he flew to Chungking, where his conversations with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and others were conspicuously cordial and successful. Now back in Delhi, Lord Louis has taken for his H.Q. a room in the Government of India Secretariat, adjacent to the Viceroy's House and just opposite General Auchinleck's quarters. He is living at Faridkot House, one of the many fine Indian houses taken over—owing to shortage of accommodation in Delhi—by the Government of India for use as military offices or messes.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

Appointed Minister of State in September last: MR. RICHARD KIDSTON LAW.

At his writing-desk: a working study of the new Minister of State.

MINISTER OF STATE AT THE AG
AND HIS

THE announcement that MR. RICHARD KIDSTON LAW, younge
been appointed Minister of State was made in September last
gave the Prime Minister the opportunity to overhaul the administrat
his work as lieutenant to Mr. Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office.
Foreign Office since 1941, and he is continuing in that department.
Canada, the United States and South America; and had journalistic
"Herald Tribune." From 1931 he has sat as Unionist Member for
Miss Mary Virginia Nellis, daughter of the late Mr. Nellis, of Roches
chess, and he and Mr

P OTOGR

Tea for two: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Law enjoy a domestic interlude. They have a house in Sussex.

The chess players: Mr. Law watches
chessboard indicates

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

The younger son of the late Mr. Andrew Bonar Law, a former Prime Minister: Mr. Richard Law.

Pointing out interesting passages in a new book: Mr. Richard Law with MRS. RICHARD LAW.

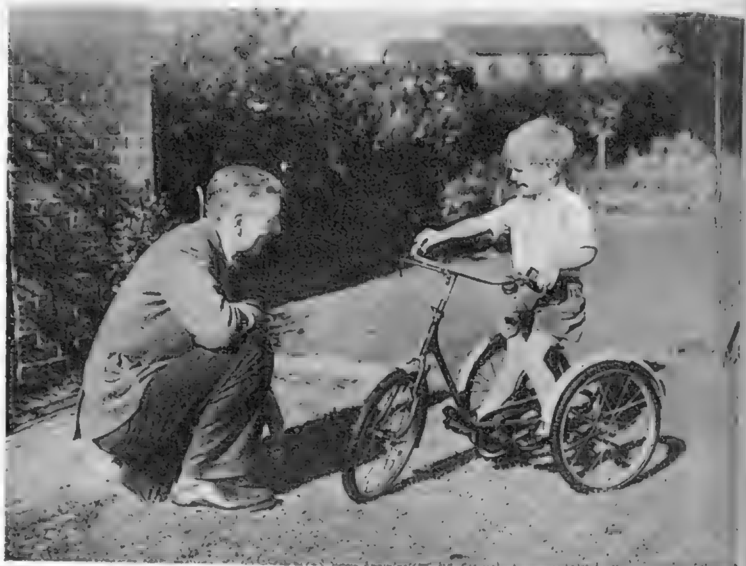
OF FORTY-TWO: MR. RICHARD LAW IFE AT HOME.

on of a former British Prime Minister, the late Mr. Andrew Bonar Law, had
the d ath of Sir Kingsley Wood created a vacancy at the Exchequer and
Mr. L w, who is forty-two years of age, has earned his promotion through
had h ld the position of Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the
was ed cated at Shrewsbury and Oxford; has travelled in Asia Minor, India,
rience n the editorial staff of the "Morning Post" and of the New York
l, and om 1940-41 he was Financial Secretary to the War Office. He married
New ork, and has two sons. His recreations are sailing, walking and
Law h a house in Sussex.

BY KE ONE.

is wife make a move. The travelling
at enthusiasm.

Formerly Miss Mary Virginia Nellis: MRS. RICHARD LAW, *American-born wife of the new Minister of State.*



MR. *and* MRS. DONALD McCULLOUGH *with* CAROLINE, ANDREW *and the Shetland.*

ANDREW *feels that his father should be able to tell him how it is the wheels go round.*

THE OTHER SIDE OF A QUESTION MASTER'S LIFE: DONALD McCULLOUGH OFF THE AIR.

Brains Trust at home: DONALD McCULLOUGH *sets the questions for his family,* COLIN, CAROLINE *and* ANDREW.

THERE have been various Question Masters in the Brains Trust on Tuesday nights, but MR. DONALD McCULLOUGH is the one we know, the one who gets the most laughs. A contemporary said that such technique as his might very properly belong to a High Court Judge who has never been called to the Bar, or words to that effect. And sometimes when the Brains Trust team has failed somehow to distinguish itself in the effort to reply to a question, Donald McCullough has neatly answered in his own way, summed up, given the verdict with a touch of wit. These pictures show the other side of his life, at home to answer all the family questions.

How do a ship's guns swing round? This father knows the answers to all his children's questions.

DONALD McCULLOUGH *gives an expert eye to the great cow-cabbages on a neighbour's farm.*

ROBERTSON HARE AS THE PERSECUTED PARSON!

The start of the trouble: Benita (JOYCE HERON) *snaps* Caroline (PAULINE TENNANT) *in the altogether—on the parson's camera. Caroline is not visible to the theatre audience.*

"The point is, we're nothing on underneath these wraps." Benita *and* Caroline *succeed in making friends with the easily-shocked parson, the Rev. Stanley Cuffe* (J. ROBERTSON HARE).

Charlie (BASIL RADFORD; *left*) *is amused when Meevor* (PERCY PARSONS; *right*) *finds what is apparently living proof in the person of Millie* (COLLEEN ENGLAND) *of his suspicions of the Rev. Stanley.*

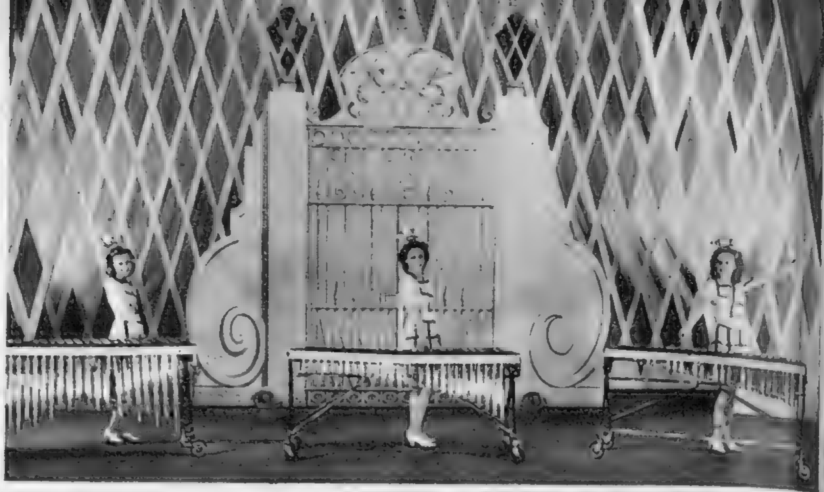
"If this is reported, you'll get cashiered": the Rev. Stanley Cuffe reads a well-deserved lecture to the W.A.A.F.s, Benita and Caroline.

"SHE FOLLOWS ME ABOUT," at the Garrick, new Ben Travers farce, features J. Robertson Hare as a clergyman in distress. He leaves his camera on the shore when swimming, and two W.A.A.F.s amuse themselves by using it to snap each other "in the altogether." The clergyman is suspected of frivolity—or worse—by members of the local Watch Committee, who unluckily find the camera, develop the film and apparently learn the worst! A storm of rain which drives Millie to take refuge in the clergyman's house and make free of his fire to dry her wet dress adds further evidence of a serious nature, and the Rev. Stanley Cuffe has difficulty in establishing his innocence.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VICKERS.

"SOMETHING IN THE AIR" AT THE PALACE THEATRE:

A/C. Jack Pendleton (JACK HULBERT) *and Terry Potter* (CICELY COURTNEIDGE), *disguised as a Cockney couple, give a Kitchen Front demonstration. Sergeant Austin* (RONALD SHINER) *is suspicious.*



SABINA GORDON, EUNICE CROWTHER *and* PEGGY WATSON, *three girls from the chorus, give a demonstration of their virtuosity on the xylophone.*

"SOMETHING IN THE AIR," at the Palace Theatre, is the new musical show with Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. This time the irrepressible pair have joined the R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. respectively, but when they think they have found an escaped German airman and a big spy-plot, they absent themselves without leave and embark on a long and glorious spy-chase which leads them into a series

Continued opposite.

Jack and Terry, being absent without leave, find Sergeant Austin (right) in their crowded train. Freddie (GEOFFREY WARDWELL) *and Roberta* (JEAN GILLIE) *are also there.*

GABRIELLE BRUNE, *as Mandy Shaw, sings most feelingly of the difficulties of wartime shopping, supported by the full beauty chorus.*

PEGGY WATSON, SABINA GORDON *and* EUNICE CROWTHER *are not only brilliant at the xylophone, but also give an extremely clever number, the "Housemaids' Dance."*

HILARIOUS SPY-CHASING BY JACK AND CICELY.

Grand Finale: the last of the many colourful scenes of "SOMETHING IN THE AIR," *new Jack Hulbert-Cicely Courtneidge show at the Palace.*

Jack [illegible]*ndleton and Terry Potter broke off their engagement b*[illegible]*re the war, but find themselves together when they join up—billeted in Jack's own house.*

Continued.]

of superb muddles, disguises and adventures. The spy-chasers themselves are also being pursued, for the Military Police are anxious to find them and bring them back to their unit—being, naturally, unaware that the highest and most patriotic motives are responsible for their absence! This adds further complications to the game of hide-and-seek, and there is endless good fooling. The musical and dance numbers of the show are well up to standard.

Jack and Terry don many disguises during the course of their spy-hunt, as they are absent without leave from the R.A.F. Here they are an Edwardian pair, doing a period waltz.

Freddie puts Jack and Terry on to fatigue duty. They are ordered to clean up the valuable carpet in their billet—it's their own, as the house belongs to Jack!

That daily dozen at high speed! CICELY COURTNEIDGE *as Terry trying to keep pace with the instructions given by the B.B.C. announcer in "Morning Exercises."*

As Marie Forêt, the girl from the Auvergne, who comes to Paris to seek her fortune in 1906: MISS MARY ELLIS.

PEASANT GIRL OF 1906, PRIMA DONNA OF 1914: MARY ELLIS AS MARIE FORÊT IN "ARC DE TRIOMPHE."

Marie Forêt, in her years of fame in 1914: MISS MARY ELLIS *as the prima donna.*

"ARC DE TRIOMPHE," new play with music by Ivor Novello, at the Phœnix, satisfies ear and eye with almost pre-war splendour of production. It 's a gesture of faith in France as well as a good show, and presents Paris from 1906 to 1925 through the success story of Marie Forêt (MARY ELLIS), peasant girl who becomes a prima donna but has to give up her young lover in order to reach her goal. Mary Ellis has never looked more enchanting, sung better or displayed her gifts as an emotional actress to greater advantage than in the part of Marie Forêt. Her beautiful period dresses were specially designed by Cecil Beaton. [PHOTOGRAPHS BY CECIL BEATON.]

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"DANCE of the Years" is the life (and death) story of James Galantry, son of an East Anglian squire. Old Galantry had married again, late in life; his second wife was a gypsy, and this accident of parentage gave James a sense of apartness, not only from his step-relations, but from the whole world. This circumstance, together with the historical setting of Miss Margery Allingham's story (it begins in the early years of the last century), makes it possible to regard James as a universal figure, relatively free from traditional associations, not bounded, to the degree that ordinary men are, by conventions springing from class, family or preconceived ideas, able to be in the world, but not of it. In short, he is both more and less than a normal human being, and most of the qualities and defects of Miss Allingham's unusual and striking story arise from her conception of her hero.

Its qualities are many. James being a stranger, a sojourner, it is not unnatural for him also to be a detached observer; he watches the changing fashions, the social revolution which led to the ascendancy of the wealthy middle-class, with the keen eye of a spectator who understands what he sees all the better for not being mentally or spiritually quite at one with it. He is (unless I have misunderstood the symbolical significance of his gypsy blood) an Everyman, an abstraction, observing the ways of other men with admirable clear-sightedness.

The Other Aspect.

But he is also a man, a human being, not a monster, who loves life, and women, and children, who has social ambitions, as well as principles and a conscience; and it is this aspect of him which does not seem altogether consistent with the rest of Miss Allingham's carefully thought-out portrait. We are told, for instance, that "James would never have agreed that it was social stability that dominated his life, yet all the struggles and growth in it arose from that. James put his faith in imaginary princes. . . ." And elsewhere she says he had grown to be a typical Victorian, eagerly accepting the standards of his age and class.

An Amazing Marriage.

These two strains in him, the conventional and the unconventional, never seem to be properly harmonised. Sometimes he acts on impulse, as when, hardly more than a boy, he ran away from home; sometimes on principle, as when he refused to marry Phœbe, the actress with whom he had lived on excellent terms for many years. On principle, too—or, at any rate, in obedience to a theory—he does marry Jinny, a girl who had been seduced and was going to have a baby. On the face of it, this marriage seems amazingly quixotic and improbable, and the true explanation, while making it seem less quixotic, makes it seem even more improbable. James scarcely knew Jinny, but her lover's father had caught his youthful imagination and become his ideal of what a man should be; and by accepting the parentage of Edwin Castor's grandson he felt that he was somehow getting nearer to his ideal.

The book is rich in characters. Jim's children have interesting careers, and an ingenious death-bed vision permits him to see how his descendant is faring in the year 1941. All these people are well described, yet none of them, it seems to me, is quite real; they are puppets, directed by a master hand, and though they perform lifelike motions, they never quite come alive. Perhaps Miss Allingham has been too careful to make their behaviour illustrate the "Dance of the Years." She has many of a novelist's gifts, including the rare power of making generalisations about life that are true and yet not platitudes. But in this book, I think, her cleverness is her enemy; by thinking about them, instead of feeling with them, she has de-naturalised her characters.

Hamilton Palace.

Among the many good novels that have been written round the fate of a house, Miss Elizabeth Kyle's "The Pleasure Dome" takes a high place. Beginning with a vivid glimpse of William Beckford on his way to visit his son-in-law, the Duke of Hamilton, it goes on to describe the ceremony at the completion of Hamilton Palace, the finest non-royal residence (it was claimed) in the British Isles. A gigantic folly it turned out to be. First the industrialisation of the Clyde Valley took away its amenities, and finally it was pulled down for the sake of the coal-seam under it. But nearly a hundred years passed before that happened; and meanwhile the ducal family passed through many vicissitudes, as did the family of Bone, the tinker, who had a feud with the Hamiltons and with true Scottish tenacity kept it up long after the cause of it had become a memory.

It was a particularly foolish feud, for the shot that killed Andrew Bone was palpably an accident. Much less excusable was the callous thoughtlessness of the French Marchioness of Clydesdale who dismissed Andrew's sister from her service and indirectly caused her tragic death. The great-niece of the Empress Josephine, this French princess who married a Scottish nobleman is perhaps the most interesting, though far from being the most amiable, character in the story; and everything connected with her—her furtive unfaithfulness to her husband in Scotland, and her much bolder liaisons in Paris—are admirably portrayed to mark the difference between two civilisations. Memorable, too, is the picture of Napoleon III. on his visit to Hamilton Palace. The Bones, who provide a foil to all this glitter and magnificence, are also well drawn, though possibly Mungo Bone, who made a fortune, lost it in the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank, and re-made it in America, is a little too close to the traditional type of the enterprising Scottish business man. Whatever Miss Kyle puts her mind to, whether it be social history or political history, characterisation or architecture, whether her scene be Scotland, France or America, she thoroughly assimilates and works it into her imaginative scheme.

MME. GUSIEV, *wife of the newly-appointed Soviet Ambassador, has arrived in London to join her husband, with their four-year-old daughter* NINA. *Last week his Excellency and Mme. Gusiev with Chargé d'Affaires of the Soviet Embassy to the Allied Governments and Mme. Orlov held a reception at the Soviet Embassy to celebrate the twenty-sixth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution. There were over a thousand guests, including Ambassadors, Ministers, Chargés d'Affaires and other members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of and Diplomatic representatives to the Allied Governments, and many others representative of the Services, the Houses of Parliament, scientists and professional men.*

A Task Well Done.

One is aware, of course, that she has set herself a task: to make the last hundred years of Hamilton Palace furnish the subject for a novel; but she has neglected none of its possibilities of irony or romance or historical reconstruction. Nor does she distort or exaggerate: her picture of the tenth Duke, the Magnifico, who suffered from *folie des grandeurs* and built himself a mausoleum over a hundred feet high, and who might easily have been romanticised out of all human shape, is perfectly credible. Miss Kyle writes extremely well, with a firmness of touch that compels confidence. "The Pleasure Dome" gives an impressive exhibition of her powers; yet I cannot help feeling that she has forced her talent somewhat against the grain, and deprived it of some of the opportunities for subtlety and half-tones she made such good use of in "But We Are Exiles."

"Personalism."

"Transformation" is an interesting anthology of prose, poetry and plays, edited by Mr. Stefan Schimanski and Mr. Henry Treece and sponsored by Mr. Herbert Read, whose essay, "The Politics of the Unpolitical," expands and clarifies the point of view on which the anthology is based. The doctrine of "Personalism," a kind of individualism with a strongly Christian tinge, is an attractive one in all but name, and the editors and Mr. Read put the case for it with considerable persuasiveness. In Mr. Read's opinion, the most valuable social unit is the family.

> From whatever realistic angle we approach the problems of human life [he writes], the family is seen as the integral unit, without which there is no social organisation, no social progress, no social order or human happiness. But we must insist that this is a sociological problem, and we must dissociate ourselves from those who think it can be solved by moral persuasion. Families are encouraged and sustained by security of life and property, decent housing and an environment in which nurture and education can be natural and serene.

He thinks that instinct can be controlled by reason, but adds "Reason has no chance if men are starving, or if they have undue cause for envy."

The contributors to "Transformation" are drawn from many nationalities, and include Alexander Blok, the Russian poet who believed that the principles of music applied to human life might solve some of its difficulties.

An Unusual Setting.

The setting of "Victory Song" is certainly unusual, for one does not associate mysterious and sinister disappearances with revivalist meetings. Fortunately, Mr. Herbert Adams does not ask us to believe that the motive for Mr. Dalton's disappearance arose from his ministry, however unpopular it might be in some quarters. Other more credible, if less creditable, possibilities soon offer themselves, and excitement mounts even if originality declines.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Dance of the Years. By Margery Allingham. (*Michael Joseph*; 10s. 6d.)

The Pleasure Dome. By Elizabeth Kyle. (*Peter Davies*; 8s. 6d.)

Transformation. Edited by Stefan Schimanski and Henry Treece. (*Gollancz*; 6s.)

Victory Song. By Herbert Adams. (*Collins*; 7s. 6d.)

ENGLAND THROUGH SOVIET EYES: "THE DEMI-PARADISE."

"Meet my father": Anne (PENELOPE WARD) introduces Ivan Kouznesoff (LAURENCE OLIVIER) to Mr. Tisdall (GEORGE THORPE).

Mr. Runalow (FELIX AYLMER), the shipping magnate, welcomes BEATRICE HARRISON, the 'cellist, to his home.

Ivan and Dick Christie (GUY MIDDLETON) have had misunderstandings, but, to Ivan's surprise, Dick says good-bye with great cordiality.

Anne looks on with amusement while her Russian friend Ivan (LAURENCE OLIVIER) checks up on Barchester with a guide-book.

The dog Darkie seems to understand Russian, to the delight of the homesick Ivan. Darkie is Laurence Olivier's own dog.

After the air raid; Mr. Runalow, who has been on duty all night, receives first-aid treatment from one of his factory hands.

A discussion on tradition between the Soviet Russian and Dick Christie (GUY MIDDLETON), dressed as Apollo in the Elizabethan pageant.

"THE DEMI-PARADISE" première at the Odeon, Leicester Square, on Thursday, November 18, is in aid of Lady Cripps's Aid to China Fund, and will be a big social occasion, which Mrs. Churchill has promised to attend. The film, which takes its name from the well-known quotation from John of Gaunt's dying speech about England in "King Richard II.," is a story of this country as seen through the eyes of a young Soviet Russian engineer who comes here just before the war, and finds nothing as he expected it would be. The misunderstandings and prejudices on both sides gradually clear up, and leave the way open for mutual tolerance, friendship and goodwill.

GRASS.*

By LYDIA BURTON.

MRS. GEORGE FRESHWATER, who was knitting, paused to listen to the sound of the next-door mowing-machine. It was late September. From her arm-chair beside the open window Mrs. Freshwater was able to see into the neighbouring garden, with its long, unbroken sweep of lawn stretching from the house to the field at the bottom. It was a perfect day for mowing, but she knew that even if a storm had been coming up little Mr. Astbury would have been at work just the same. This grass-mowing seemed to have become an obsession with him. Nearly every afternoon, from three o'clock to four, he was hard at it, garden hat drooping over his mild, round face, with its button nose, meek mouth, and innocent, owlish spectacles. When she teased little Hector Astbury about it sometimes, he would blink rapidly in his nervous fashion, clear his throat and explain that he liked mowing grass because it soothed his nerves. Ever since. . . .

There was no need for him to finish the sentence. It was two years since giddy, fluffy-headed Gladys Astbury had run away from him, packing her bag one September night and leaving behind her only a note and a handful of bittersweet memories. Hector had burned the note and never divulged what was in it. Little enough, in all probability. Gladys Astbury had not been the kind of woman likely to express herself with refinement of feeling towards a husband thirty years her senior, whom she had married for his income.

To most of the Astburys' circle, the affair had come in the nature of a release for Hector, but he had taken it hard. " I wonder if George would pine like that for me ? " reflected Mrs. Freshwater, and decided, with a sigh, that it was unlikely. A question of wounded self-esteem in part, no doubt ; but from the quivering way Hector had warded off sympathetic enquiries, explaining with a sort of meek pride that no doubt Gladys had had her point of view, and that he would prefer to leave the topic undiscussed, there was no doubt that he had been cut to the quick.

And what a waste of emotion it was ! Imagine the folly of devoting as much as two seconds to the memory of a cheap little piece like Gladys ! It was difficult to understand what Hector had seen in her in the first place, but easier when you remembered his unnatural upbringing—tied to the apron-strings of that vampire mother of his, who used to boast that so long as she was alive her son would never trouble to look for another sweetheart. The wonder was that Hector had stuck it as long as he did. When he rebelled, and announced his engagement to a young woman of twenty-three (Hector was an old man of fifty-three), the whole town felt inclined to cheer him. This was before they had seen Gladys.

Mrs. Astbury, senior, succumbed shortly afterwards to a heart attack, brought on, no doubt, by chagrin. The general opinion of the future Mrs. Astbury was that Hector had fallen out of the frying-pan into the fire. Gladys was a synthetic blonde of no education, with a doll-like prettiness, a common voice and large, pert blue eyes.

Soon after the wedding they sold Hector's old home and came to live in the house next door. It was much too large for two people, but Gladys liked to cut a dash. For a time all went well. Hector was still completely enslaved, and fetched and carried for his wife all day (he had retired from his bookshop business at his mother's death) in very much the same style as he had once fetched and carried for old Mrs. Astbury. He cheerfully spent a great deal of money—far more than he could have afforded—on buying her clothes and furs and trinkets. If Gladys wanted a double-fox stole, why shouldn't she have it ? And if it made her happy to go out dancing, or playing at amateur theatricals—pastimes at which Hector himself was a hopeless fish-out-of-water—where was the harm in it ? he demanded, beaming over the garden wall at Mrs. Freshwater. He could trust Gladys.

This state of affairs soon ended. Either Gladys became contemptuously careless, or Hector less innocently unsuspecting. Soon they could hear her nagging him all day. Generally, the theme was money. She seemed to be able to get through a surprising amount of money without having anything to show for it. When Hector, helpless and miserable, fled the house, she would follow him into the garden and continue the argument there until, in sheer desperation, they would hear him promising her whatever she wanted. Very soon a hunted, furtive expression eclipsed his former childlike serenity. He took to going for long walks, and was observed leaning against the parapet of the river bridge, staring unseeingly into the water. Mrs. Freshwater and her husband were becoming seriously worried about him when suddenly he took to gardening. He was unused to manual labour, and the intensity with which he turned to it now was astonishing and, after a time, alarming. From early in the morning until dusk he was digging and weeding and watering. He dismissed the jobbing gardener and insisted upon tackling everything himself. " The fellow 'll kill himself," commented George.

" Perhaps that 's what he 's trying to do," she said, dryly. " Do you blame him ? "

" My God, no. The life that woman leads him. If I were in his place I 'd soon put my foot down."

But Hector Astbury had not put down his foot. As any of his friends could have said, he was incapable of such an action. He must have had some inkling of the whispered tales that were by now circulating about Gladys Astbury, but he gave no sign of it. Whilst Gladys was entertaining her various friends in the rose-pink drawing-room, he was digging with a set, expressionless face in his potato-patch, a shabby little bald-headed man, and whilst his young wife, cheaply glamorous in silver-fox and satin, was driving off to theatres or restaurants with one or the other of her various admirers, Hector would be stooping late amongst his raspberries, or wheeling down yet another barrowful of rubbish to the pit he had dug for it at the bottom of the garden.

The climax had come sooner than anyone had anticipated. It had been a blazing September ; real heat-wave weather. For nearly a week Mrs. Freshwater had scarcely been outside the house. Things had been unusually quiet next door, and for days she had not heard a sound of Gladys Astbury's shrill voice. Perhaps the two of them had gone away to the seaside.

A chance glimpse of Hector dispelled this idea. He was coming up the path from the rubbish-pit mopping at his hot face. At the sight of his haggard expression she could not help crying out : " Hector ! Is anything wrong ? "

And then it had all come out. Gladys had gone ; had left him. Some producer fellow whom she had met recently had offered her a job on the London stage ; she 'd always had an idea that she could act, and this had been too much for her. He had seen it coming for some time, added Hector in a dreary, lifeless way. He 'd gone to bed early with a bad headache a few days before, and there had been a scribbled note on his dressing-table next morning. He had intended to try to cover up things for a little longer, just in case she should come back to him ; but everyone was bound to find out before long.

All this time Hector had continued to stare with such a despairing look on his face that she was almost frightened. She made him come into her drawing-room for a cup of tea, which he had drunk in a dazed way, like someone in a dream. That was two years ago. She and George and the rest of their friends had done what they could for him, of course. He was a gentle, kindly little man, and most people liked him ; it was astonishing how many invitations he received to tea- and coffee-parties. But the thought often struck Mrs. Freshwater that he had never got over it. There was often a withdrawn, brooding look on his face that made her wonder whether he had heard from Gladys again. Perhaps she had been writing to ask him for money. But whatever had happened, one thing was certain : nobody would ever hear a word of it. He had become so silent lately that she sometimes wondered whether the shock had not turned his brain a little ; there were days when he seemed to avoid meeting people. And he had become queer over so many little, unimportant things—for instance, that whim of his to have the whole of his garden dug up and replaced with turf. It was when she had remonstrated with him about this that he had made his remark about grass-mowing being good for his nerves. Well, if little Hector Astbury liked to wear himself out mowing his lawns, it was certainly nobody's business but his own.

Mrs. Freshwater came to the last stitch and laid aside her needles. The clock over the mantelshelf struck four in its silvery voice. A stillness outside caused her to turn her head. Yes ; little Mr. Astbury, punctual to the minute, had knocked off work for the day. He was lifting the box-load of freshly cut grass from the machine to empty it. A sudden thought struck her.

" George," she said dreamily, as her husband came into the room, " whatever does Hector Astbury do with all his grass ? "

" Do with it ? " he echoed in mild surprise. " Why, puts it on a heap, of course, the same as the rest of us."

Mrs. Freshwater made no reply. She was long-sighted, and from where she sat she could see Mr. Astbury's face distinctly as he carried the last boxful of grass down to the great green mound at the bottom of his garden. Frozen into immobility, she watched him raise the box to shoulder-height and then pour out the grass from it with deliberate slowness, in a thick green trickle.

. . . What an extraordinary expression.

Almost as if he were—enjoying himself.

THE END.

***All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.**

It is probable that the ceremonial drinking of healths is derived from the Greco-Roman custom of pouring libations to the gods. A more sophisticated age introduced the drinking to living personages. But it must not be supposed that in classical days it was the gods alone who enjoyed themselves. Horace found it necessary to chide the over indulgent with

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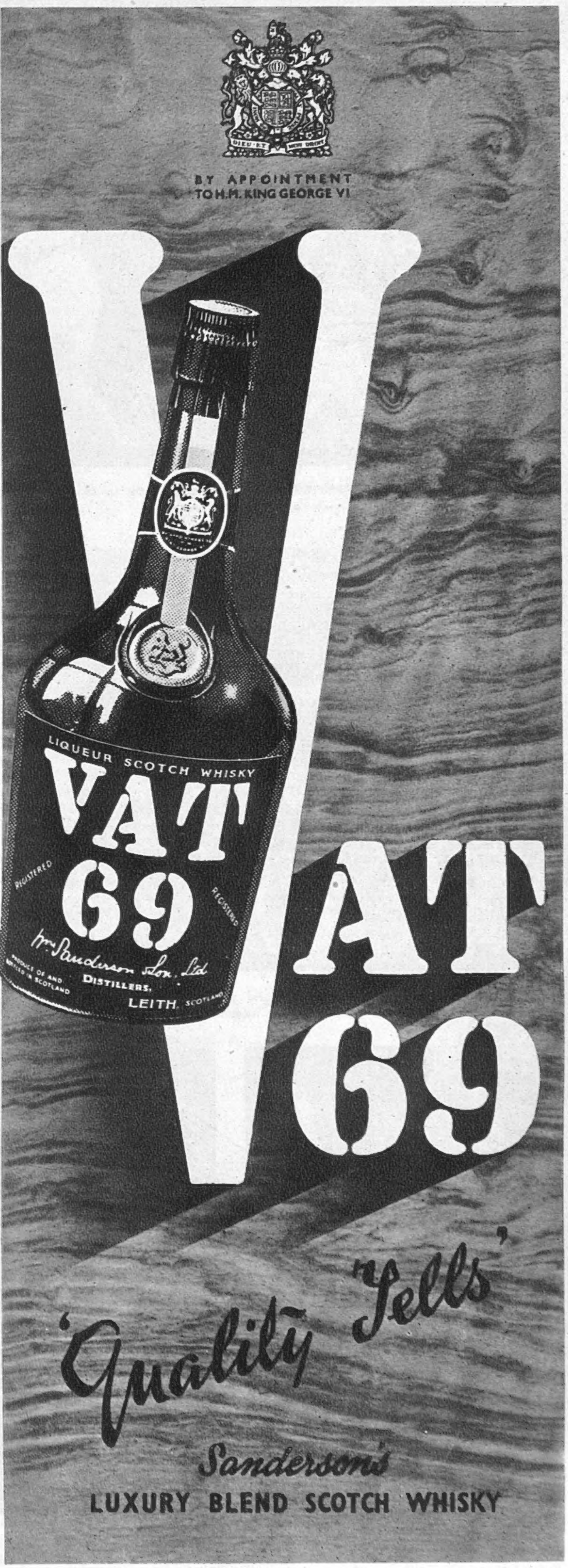

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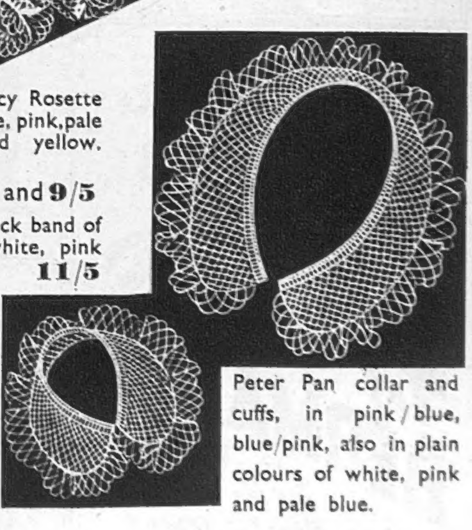

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